

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, XF

SUBJECT: EC COMMISSION REACTIONS TO INITIAL EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE
MEETING

REF: A) DUBLIN 1056

B) DUBLIN 1048

1. SUMMARY: IN A BRUSSELS PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE
CONCLUSION OF THE RECENT CAIRO MEETING AND IN CONVERSATIONS
WITH MISSION OFFICERS, THE EC COMMISSION HAS MADE CLEAR THAT
IT HAS NO INTENTION OF AGREEING TO ANY NEW PREFERENTIAL
TRADE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EURO/ARAB
DIALOGUE. THE CAIRO SESSION WENT WELL IN THE COM-
MISSION'S VIEW, LAUNCHING THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP"
FAVORABLY AND WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL COMPLEXITY.

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END SUMMARY.

2. KLAUS MEYER, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EC COMMISSION, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS ON JUNE 19, REPORTED THE RESULTS OF THE EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE MEETINGS IN CAIRO IN WHICH HE PARTICIPATED. HE COMMENTED ON THE IMPORTANCE THE ARAB LEAGUE ATTACHED TO THE MEETINGS AND SAID THAT BOTH SIDES ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DIALOGUE WAS TO ESTABLISH A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH COULD DEVELOP ALONG THE LINES INDICATED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE. MEYER EMPHASIZED THAT THE EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE WOULD REPLACE NEITHER BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EC MEMBER STATES AND ARAB COUNTRIES NOR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EC, AS A COMMUNITY, AND THOSE COUNTRIES. THE DIALOGUE IS AIMED AT SETTING UP A THIRD LEVEL OF COOPERATION DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT MEMBER STATES AND COMMUNITY BILATERAL RELATIONS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MEYER SAID THAT THE EC CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT DISCUSSION OF PREFERENTIAL TRADE RELATIONS CANNOT ENTER INTO THE EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE. TRADE CONCESSIONS WOULD BE RESERVED FOR DISCUSSIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY'S GLOBAL MEDITERRANEAN POLICY, THE LIME CONVENTION OR GENERALIZED PREFERENCE SCHEME. GENERAL TRADE COOPERATION ENVISAGED IN THE EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE WOULD CONCERN THE PROMOTION OF TRADE AND BETTER UTILIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY'S GENERALIZED PREFERENCE SYSTEM. MEYER SAID THAT DURING THE CAIRO MEETING THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF THE REPORTED "BOYCOTT" BY ARAB COUNTRIES AGAINST THOSE COMMUNITY FIRMS HAVING DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL.

4. IN A CONVERSATION WITH CASPARI OF THE COMMISSION'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL, WE ASKED ABOUT REPORTS THAT THE ARAB SIDE HAD PRESSED FOR PREFERENTIAL TRADE TREATMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIALOGUE. CASPARI SAID THAT THE ARAB SIDE IS INDEED INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING ACCESS TO EC MARKETS ALONG PREFERENTIAL LINES (AS WILL BE THE CASE FOR THE MAGHREB AND MASHRAQ COUNTRIES WHEN NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDE). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE EC SIDE RESISTED THIS FIRMLY AND TOLD THE ARABS THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF GEOGRAPHIC EXTENSION OF PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS BEYOND THOSE CURRENTLY IN PLACE OR ENVISIONED. THE CORE ELEMENTS UNDER THE TRADE SECTOR OF THE DIALOGUE, HE POINTED OUT, WOULD BE GREATER UTILIZATION OF THE EC'S GSP TOGETHER WITH A TRADE STUDY GROUP WHICH CASPARI LIKENED TO THE ONE SOAMES WORKED OUT WITH THE ASEAN COUNTRIES LAST FALL (TRADE

PROBLEMS, TRADE PROMOTION, AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE). HE NOTED THAT THE EC HAS NO ILLUSIONS CONCERNING THE ARABS' INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO PRESS THE ISSUE, BUT INSISTED THAT THE CASEY/SOAMES UNDERSTANDING ON GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATION OF EC PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS WOULD BE RESPECTED BY THE COMMISSION.

6. REGARDING THE QUESTION OF A EURO/ARAB GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING INVOLVING THE PLO, CASPARI SAID THAT WHILE THE EC HAD MANAGED TO PUT THIS ISSUE OFF FOR THE TIME BEING, HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ARABS WOULD RENEW PRESSURE FOR HOLDING SUCH A MEETING. HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD CHART THEIR COURSE ON THIS ISSUE AT A MEETING THEY HAVE SET FOR SEPTEMBER. CASPARI SAID THE COMMISSION WAS PLEASED WITH THE WAY THE DENATIONALIZED FORMULA HAD WORKED THIS TIME AND COMMENTED THAT IN FACT THE PLO REPRESENTATIVES, THOUGH NOT IDENTIFIED AS SUCH, WERE THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CAPABLE PEOPLE ON THE ARAB SIDE. SIMILARLY, HE WAS INTERESTED TO SEE THE RELATIVELY CONFINED ROLE THAT THE ALGERIANS PLAYED. GREENWALD

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